

INFOCUS

The Official Publication of the Jamaican Canadian Association

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NOVEMBER 2005 Issue

Celebrating Founding Members Byron and Violet May Carter

"I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day: I'd rather one would walk with me than merely tell the way."

This quote from Edgar Guest typifies the spirit and actions of Byron and Violet (Vie) Carter. These foundation members of the Jamaican Canadian Association have worked tirelessly in assisting the fledgling Association founded in 1962 to grow into its present mature status in the Canadian society.

Byron and Vie Carter were there at the very beginning of the JCA with Vie being one of the original twelve signatures on the first official document of the Association. The roles played by Byron and Vie in the life of the Jamaican Canadian Association included everything from picking up the garbage and cleaning the bathrooms to serving on the first JCA Board of Directors and on many standing committees. These two loyal JCA members never left the Association since its inception in 1962.

Byron, apart from his long-standing service on the Board of Directors chairs the Custodian ad hoc Committee. He has been committed to The Bingo Program from its inception and guarded the funds garnered from Bingo with passion. Many a staff that has passed through the JCA can thank Byron for much of the financial benefits they received. The Association has benefited greatly from his engineering skills. He uses his skills to repair, build and improve things at the JCA Centre for the benefit of all.

Vie has been one of the main link between JCA's past and present. She has been the JCA "unofficial" historian and many members will attribute their becoming members to Vie's warm encouragement and invitations. Her private collections of JCA memorabilia and the Association's written material history, is unsurpassed.

Vie has to be the most well versed member with respect to the constitutional history of the Jamaican Canadian Association, and

has always been in demand for sagely interpretation of the constitution.

Even as Byron's engineering has been one pillar to JCA, Vie's conciliatory, calm and reasoned cerebral voice is that other pillar. This tribute to the Carter's would not be complete unless it was stated clearly that even as they dedicated thousands of volunteer hours to the Jamaican Canadian Association they simultaneously committed themselves to being the best parents and grandparents. Byron and Vie are the proud parents of four very successful children and doting grandparents to 9 Grandchildren.

The Jamaican Canadian Association owes much of its achievements to this couple that never failed to give of themselves and their resources to the betterment of not just the Association, but of those who eventually benefited and continue to benefit from its services. Thanks to Byron and Vie for over 43 years of solid and total commitment.

Editor's note: *It is with deep sadness that the Association announces the passing of Violet May Carter on Friday, October 28, 2005. The PR Committee had committed to writing this article on the Carter's prior to her passing. Vie, you will be greatly missed by those whose lives you have touched. RIP*

Dr. Vincent G. Conville & Claudette Cameron-Stewart



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IN FOCUS

November 2005 Issue

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Mrs. Violet Carter

As one of the JCA founders Mrs. Violet (Vie) Carter leaves a legacy of dedication and perseverance. Although Mrs. Carter passed away recently her visions for the JCA and our community continue to be realized daily.

Editorial

The consummate critic, Claudette Cameron-Brown, demonstrates finesse while tackling critical subjects such as discrimination in the tsunami relief and the passing of Rosa Parks. Claudette breaks-down all that is relevant and poignant for those of color living in our community.

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Sean Thomas President of Young Black Writers appraises the life of a 15 year old black youth's value and contribution to society in the gritty urban landscape he visits from his bedroom window.

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Lifestyle

Membership Services

Calling on all the members!

JCA Book Club

Our recent membership survey concluded That less than 75% of our community Is actively reading. Long overdue the JCA Presents it's book club. 10 new books have Been selected for your review.

Editorial

It is said, "the times are a changing". As far as environmental and weather patterns are concerned, by simple observation, it is not hard to believe that this is so.

In December 2004 there was the Tsunami that rocked the world and while people in the affected areas in Asia are still trying to recover from the effects of the Tsunami, there have been countless numbers of floods and earthquakes and other natural disasters that are supposedly acts of God. However, environmentalists will tell say, these changes to the various weather patterns around the world are a direct result of changes to the ozone layers which can all be traced back to man's disrespect and disregard for nature and the environment.

While the world is paying full attention to the people of Pakistan following its most recent devastating earthquake, many have failed to realize that there are other places that are plagued with serious and very severe weather patterns. It is important that we be reminded that there have been over twenty (20) hurricanes in the Caribbean and the Americas in less than six months in the year 2005.

It will be impossible to forget what happened in the southern states of the USA, with Louisiana forever etched in our minds, not so much for its great blues music and one of a kind food, but for extremely disturbing pictures of the most inhumane kind. While Louisiana was happening many seemed to have forgotten that many of the countries in the Caribbean were faced with severe effects of the same hurricanes. Not much has been reported on the terrible effects being felt in the Caribbean and we need to focus some time and resources on shoring up the region against what seems to be increased hurricane activities.

The island of Jamaica has seen continuous rains for over one month starting with the effects of Hurricane Katrina. It has become worrisome to the people of Jamaica that a disaster seems to just be waiting to happen. There does not seem to be too much room left for additional rains and fears are now creeping in as to whether

the country's infrastructure will be able to withstand further rains. Pictures coming out of Jamaica have become very disturbing of roads all across the island being in the worst disrepair ever seen.

So, while the world focuses on the instant disasters, plans need to be put in place to prevent clear and present disasters from happening in the Caribbean in the not too distant future, simply because we ignored the warnings. All governments and nationals of the Caribbean need to take seriously the old adage, "to be forewarned is to be forearmed."

On another note – Goodbye and Thanks: She was born Rosa Louise McCauley on December 4, 1913 in Tuskegee, Alabama at a time when Blacks were slaves and considered non-persons. On December 1, 1955 at the age of 42, "tired and fed up", she bucked the established norms by refusing to obey the drivers order to get up from her seat on a Cleveland Avenue bus and give it to a white man.

She was known to the world as Rosa Parks. On October 24, 2005, after nearly 50 years of making Black Americans and by extension Black folks worldwide be recognized as humans, with rights to equal treatment, Rosa Parks died in Detroit, Michigan.

Due to Rosa's defiance and firm stand in 1955, on November 13, 1956, thirteen (13) months after Blacks, led by Martin Luther King Jr., boycotted the buses in Alabama, the United States Supreme Court outlawed segregation in the City of Montgomery, Alabama, in the case dubbed Browder vs. Gayle.

Rosa Parks has left us a rich and proud history and it is important for young Blacks everywhere to take seriously the following words of Rosa Parks when she said that Blacks should "be dedicated enough to make useful lives for themselves and to help others." Thanks Rosa!

IN FOCUS

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President's Corner

Greetings to all of our members and readers of the JCA Quarterly Newsletter. In Focus. This past month one of JCA's dignitaries and trailblazers, Mrs. Violet Carter (nee Nugent) passed away. Mrs Carter's remarkable contributions to JCA, and the broader community will never be forgotten. Her spirit and contributions are permanently etched in this institution and will continue to influence JCA's strength, steadiness and resilience. This issue of In Focus is dedicated to her memory..

With this issue, we welcome the launch of the new and fresh look of the JCA Newsletter. This is one of the many changes and new directions that you can expect to see as the leadership of the organization takes things in hand to set the organization on a clear path ahead. I would like to express our thanks to our Public Relations Chairperson Mr. Leo Campbell and the members of the Public Relations Committee - for the excellent work they have undertaken to revamp our newsletter, to make it more reader -friendly and newsworthy. We trust that you, our readers, will find the newsletter more informative and inspiring.

As the year unfolds, organizationally we have been busy taking steps to establish procedural and policy changes to enhance the smooth functioning of our operations, and to better interface the social services and membership activities of the organization. By the time you receive this Newsletter, we will be ready to present the organizational work plan at the November Quarterly Membership meeting. The Work plan will assist and guide our activities and outline the concrete goals to be achieved for the remainder of the fiscal year. As well, it will establish the broad goals to be achieved for the following year.

In this past Quarter, we continued to provide our standard programs and activities to the community and our membership at large. Here is a brief overview of some the activities that we have been engaged with:

Education: **The Saturday Morning Tutorial Program.** Started in 1995, this program continues to be a mainstay for the Association. The program provides tutoring for children in grades three through 12 in the foundational subjects - English and Mathematics. Our tutors are all volunteers from a broad diversity of professional disciplines including teachers, medical doctors, psychologists, parents, and graduates of the tutorial program.

JCA was recently honoured to have the Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Dalton McGuinty and Minister for Children

and Youth Services, the Honourable Mary Anne Chambers visit our Saturday Morning Tutorial Program, this past September. This was an unexpected visit by the Premier and certainly provided a highlight for the students and everyone at JCA on that day!

The Women's Committee and the Education Committee jointly hosted a Health Fair for the community at the Centre in October. The Health Fair brought together various services from the health sector to promote their services and provide educational and informational material for the guests - these included information booths on Sickle Cell, Dental Health, Heart and Stroke, Organ Donation, Mental Health Care, Public Health among others.

The Youth Affairs Committee (YAC) held their 4th Annual Young Professional Gala "Purpose, Passion, Perseverance". The Keynote address by Ontario Supreme Court Judge Michael Tulloch, engaged and inspired the audience to actively take part in their community by getting involved. The event was truly a great success with over 400 attendees, over 20 corporate, organizational sponsors and partners. The committee was able to achieve their goal to increase the number of YAC Rising Star Scholarship from 1 to 3 scholarships. The scholarships provide financial aid for youths to further their Post Secondary studies.

Some of the initiatives the YAC will undertake include a mentorship program, community & education outreach, engagement in civic responsibilities, and participation in local sports league. Congratulations to the YAC and the excellent work they have been doing to strengthen and enhance JCA's role and impact among the youth constituencies.

The Vice-president, Barbara Thomas convened an All-Committees Meeting in October. This was an opportunity for all the committees to discuss common issues and share information about their respective committee activities.

Community Partnership Initiative

JCA continues to be an active member of the Coalition of African Canadian Organizations (the Coalition). As you may be aware, the Coalition has met with the Premier of Ontario and the Mayor of the City of Toronto and presented An Action Plan for the African Canadian Community to both leaders. Both the Premier and Mayor have committed to participate in the High Level Summit that the Coalition has called for with all three levels of government. This is a Summit that will be focused on solutions.

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President's Corner... continued

Prime Minister Paul Martin has yet to give a nod to meet with the Coalition. Efforts to get the Prime Minister to the table are mounting. The lack of an affirmative response from the Prime Minister on this matter does not bode well for his relationship with the African Canadian community.

The Coalition has also embarked on the first of a series of Community Forums it will convene with the African Canadian community across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). These community forums will provide an opportunity for the Coalition to meet with the community and present the Action Plan. The first Community Forum was held at the JCA on October 14, 2005. The Forum was well attended and overall there was strong support for the Coalition. Future community forums will be posted on JCA's website.

The formation of the Coalition is a crucial development for the African Canadian community, in this current situation. The fact that these organizations have joined forces to collectively address the violence and the underlying social conditions that are impacting the African Canadian community, and are at the root of the violence, is a leap forward. It signals a new direction in which African Canadian organizations, working for and with the community, can collectively take a leading role to define and shape an action plan for systemic and sustainable changes. We have called for a community driven action plan to be implemented in partnership with our federal, provincial and municipal governments, and eventually with the private sector. It will centrally anchor our role as a community to look internally at ourselves, to strengthen our capacity as a community to address our situation.

The Coalition has not called for Segregation, nor is promoting this. The Toronto Star article titled "A Call For Separateness" which appeared in the October 8th issue of the paper, spawned a series of media attention on the Coalition - both good and bad. On the negative side, the Coalition has been bombarded with attacks and disinformation fed to the public, some of this, not surprisingly, coming from individuals within our own community. It is especially important that as a community, we understand what is at play with the attacks and the deliberate disinformation that is being and will likely continue to be levied against the Coalition. At the root of this is an agenda to discredit and destroy the Coalition.

The Coalition is about collectively organizing and mobilizing action for change for the African Canadian community. It is about collective leadership. It is about coalescing our collective strength and power for the betterment of the community. We know that the formation of the Coalition as a strong and cohesive entity will be a threat to many. We know that there are some who will try to tear us down. We also know the tried and true tactic of "divide and conquer" will be at play in an attempt to sabotage and destroy. Therefore, it is up to us in the African Canadian community, individually and collectively, to be vigilant. Let us place our community's interest as a priority. Let us demonstrate the courage necessary to support the Coalition and ensure that it succeeds -- that our community succeeds - that our families succeed --- and ultimately, that all of our youth - our future - succeeds !



How can you support the work of the Coalition?

- Write/Email to the Prime Minister and let him know you support the Coalition and that he should participate in the High Level Summit called by the Coalition. [Email: pm@pm.gc.ca or fax (613) 941-6900]
- Call your local MP and let them know you want them to raise the Coalition's call in the House (on Parliament Hill)
- Participate in the Community meetings when they are convened in your area
- Critically examine the messages of the mainstream articles that are so quick to castigate the Coalition
- Rather than stand on the side and criticize, find some way of supporting the upliftment and progress of the African Canadian community - whether through the Coalition, its member organizations or some other form of support and involvement. Its always easy to criticize, the real challenge is to take action to make a positive change

I firmly believe that this is our time to collectively make significant strides for the African Canadian community. Will you stand up and be counted in this struggle?

Nuff respect!

Sandra Carnegie-Douglas, President
president@jcassoc.org

JCA Quarterly Membership Meeting

November 27th, 2005

JCA CENTRE, 995 Arrow Road, Toronto

WOMEN'S SPACE

UNA REID

Taken from Nursing Pioneers:
April 2005

The growth of nursing education in the Caribbean can be traced to the work of Una Reid, who graduated from University of Toronto in 1971 with a Post-Basic B.Sc. in Nursing. In 1976 she graduated from the University of British Columbia with a Master of Science in Nursing, and joined the Pan-American Health Organization/ World Health Organization, where she worked as the sub-regional Advisor in Nursing Education and, later as the Advisor in Human Resource Development. In 1984, Reid earned a Master in Education and a Doctorate in Education from Teachers' College, British Columbia.

In a very busy and fruitful career, Reid assumed responsibility for the redevelopment of the curricula for the schools of Nursing in the Caribbean, switching the focus from secondary to primary care. Similar work was done on post-basic nursing education programs as quality assurance for nursing education and nursing service. She developed many teaching manuals plus The Regional

Examination for Nurse Registration. Today she takes pride in what she calls "self-sufficiency of the region's nursing schools. "I worked myself out of a job." That gives me enormous satisfaction. It's what I set out to do.

Her career has taken her around the world, as a nurse in Jamaica, Edinburgh, London, and Toronto; as a lecturer and clinical instructor in Sudbury and Vancouver, as a research assistant in Vancouver, and as a visiting professor in nursing in Australia. She retired from

PAHO/WHO in 1995, and is now a private consultant in human resource development. As such, she has worked in Bahrain, Bhutan, Indonesia, and around the Caribbean and Africa.

"My experience taught me not to be judgemental," she says. I have worked in countries where healthcare isn't well resourced. But having more resource doesn't mean you're using them as you should. You do the best you can with what you have, wherever you are, at the same time striving to do better.



JAMAICAN CANADIAN ASSOCIATION'S Violence Against Women Program

A program for women committed to providing you with a safe and confidential environment to help you deal with issues of violence and abuse. The program provides:

- individual and group counselling to women and their children
- crisis counselling, escort service, support, educational workshops, referral and advocacy

Our counseling service is available on an ongoing basis to any woman in need.

West End Sexual Abuse Treatment (WESAT) Program is a group for young black girls 13-18 years and 19-24 years who have been sexually assaulted. The WESAT program offers young women the opportunity to

- talk with other young women who have had similar experiences and
- learn how to cope with the effects of sexual assault and abuse.

WESAT is offered at the JCA on Wednesday evenings 6:00-8:00pm

Women2Women Support Group is a new service at JCA for abused women who are ready to move on with their lives. The group is facilitated by women who have encountered domestic violence and who will have an opportunity to learn about:

- Impacts of abuse
- Healthy coping strategies
- Managing change & overcoming obstacles
- Money management for women
- Career, training and education planning
- Leadership and empowerment
- Parenting after abuse
- Forming and maintaining healthy relationships
- Developing a supportive network

Women2Women is offered every other Wednesday evening 6:30 – 8:30pm and begins Wednesday, November 9th, 2005

December 6th Commemoration

Join us at the JCA on December 6th, 2005 as we commemorate, along with the rest of Canada, the lives of the 14 women who were brutally gunned down in Montreal in 1989, as well as the lives of countless other women who are killed as a result of domestic violence on a daily basis.

Please contact the JCA for details.

For further information or to participate in any of our VAW initiatives, please contact:

Marlene McKintosh, Program Director/VAW Counsellor
416-746-5772, ext. 224

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For The Brothers

"The old adage "it is better late than never" is quite apt in this situation. There is a Men's Corner in the revamped In Focus!"

THE IDEA OF AN ANNUAL MEN'S BREAKFAST!

Francis Bruce McDonald and Dr. Vincent G. Conville have always discussed the need for a men's forum among the male population of the JCA. In 2004, we decided to put our thoughts into action. Resulting in the organizing of our first Fathers Day Breakfast. .

The first Fathers' Day Breakfast was an overwhelming success. The committee expected approximately 60 people, but imagine the surprise, when we had over 120 people in attendance. Our second Fathers' Day breakfast was even more successful to the extent that we had to utilize the large banquet hall instead of the Members' Lounge.

On both occasions, we had guest speakers. The theme of their talk centered on the role of the Black father in society. The misconceptions and stereotypes, which brand Black fathers as shiftless and irresponsible, were addressed. Professor Don Williams, a former lecturer at Ryerson and York Universities gave a synopsis of the economic situations especially in North America which have given rise to the emasculation of a large percentage of Black fathers since their forced migration from their ancestral homeland. The speakers observed that most Black fathers are caring, responsible and family-oriented people.

It was refreshing to see and hear daughters and sons praising their dads as their heroes and role models. Of greater interest was the number of

young fathers with their families who attended our first two Fathers' Day Breakfasts.

Dr. Earl Ofari Hutchinson of Family Digest Today stated, "American society wrapped its tight cloak of invisibility around Black fatherhood during slavery. At that time wives were separated from their husbands. Children were brutally torn from their fathers and sold. Most slave masters considered marriage a nuisance and they discouraged it. If that was true, then how could Black families be families? How could Black fathers be fathers? Yet in spite of history, many were.

No heroic sagas or tales were written about these men. No tributes were paid to them. So the myth grew that they did not exist. But they did. Black fathers had families. And they cared about them. Black fathers took great risks and made sacrifices to free their wives and children from bondage. Some physically rescued them. Others bought them. They were driven by a sense of loyalty and love. They were desperate to fulfill their responsibilities as fathers."

So where do we go from here? We will be continuing our theme of the Black Father in society. We will be exploring how best to mentor our Black sons to make them into responsible and progressive citizens and excellent fathers. It will be necessary for us to research the history of the Black father in the Americas and to correct the stereotypes we are faced with each day. It is important for our Black sons to become more cognizant of their history.

Our Committee is in the process of making plans for an even better Fathers' Day Breakfast in June 2006.

Written by:
Francis Bruce McDonald
Dr. Vincent G. Conville

Presentation of Deed of Gift

Dear JCA members:

- Over a year ago, our Board of Directors embarked on a partnership with the National Archive of Canada in which the Archive would collect and store The JCA's archival materials. The proper storing of materials relating to our history in a central location will be beneficial to posterity.
- Since our Board of Directors made this decision, a substantial collection of materials was made, and handed over to the National Archive in Ottawa.
- You are all invited to our Quarterly Meeting on Sunday, November 27, at 2:00 P.M. to witness the presentation of a Deed of Gift to the JCA by the National Archive of Canada.
- It is important that we as a part of this great multicultural experiment called Canada, leave our social, political and philosophical history for our children. They in turn will have access to this material and will be able to interpret their history for themselves.
- It should be noted that most of the materials donated in this first collection is from private members' collections. The collection process is still taking place.

Dr. Vincent G. Conville
Chairperson of Collection Committee

Executive Director's Report

It is amazing that a year has gone by since my arrival at JCA. Very early into my employment, I discovered, not surprisingly, that there is a remarkable amount of enthusiasm within the Association. Dedicated Staff, Members, Coordinating Committees and networks, have committed to work together to uphold the values of the Association and to ensure that our programs and services are second to none.

Over the last 6 months, we provided direct services to over 300 men, women, youth and children through our social, employment and settlement services along with responding to dozens of telephone enquires on a daily basis.

We acknowledge that we need to enhance our programs for youth, specifically our Transition Program (K-Club); we are therefore, exploring opportunities to implement an employment and education component to this program with emphasis on the trades.

We continue to participate in many community activities to promote what we do here at The JCA. In September we were one of the few organizations that were selected to showcase at the annual United Way Leaps and Bound event. This event provided a wonderful marketing opportunity and we were pleased to introduce people to The JCA and to update those who have connected with us in the past. We participated in several open houses at our local school boards and at school boards in other jurisdictions. These events are ideal for us to showcase our early intervention program (LIP) Leaders in Partnership as well as to promote other services of the agency.

This year we want to expand and enhance our programs. We will do this through community outreach, partnerships, development and implementation of new programs, especially programs directed at our youth. We are currently partnering with other organizations and institutions to deliver a training program to youth in the

Jane/Finch area (Multi-Media Project). The JCA is delivering the Life Skills component of this program. This is a pilot project that we are hoping will spin-off to even more programs for youth.

We will be launching a direct mail program soon and I encourage each member and friend of the JCA to respond generously to this initiative. It is only through your support that we can continue to do the things that we do at the JCA. As we expand our programs and services we are identifying funding opportunities in an effort to build the capacity of the Association to deliver quality programming.

I sincerely thank everyone who continue to support the work of the JCA and as we are approaching the holiday season, I do wish you all a very safe and fun-filled holiday and best wishes for 2006.

Melody Brown,
Executive Director

Membership Services

It was a very busy summer for the Membership Services Committee. We are very thankful for a safe and enjoyable one, and hope all members had a great summer.

Seniors Brunch: The Seniors Brunch was very successful. Those attended were given a recap of our history Blacks in Toronto by guest speaker and Past President Mr. Roy Williams. The crowd was entertained by our own Letna Allan-Rowe, the Seniors Choir, David Espeut Jr, Jassette Haughton and Christopher as "Sammy Davis Junior". Thanks to all the seniors who attended and participated.

Our Thoughts and Prayers: Let us remember the following Members and friends in our thoughts.

- John Brooks - Castlview Wychwood Nursing home
- Mrs. Ivy Coke - Sunnybrook Hospital
- Frank Wallace - Bendal Acres Nursing Home
- Cecil Brooks
- Mel Thompson
- Iris Henry

Best wishes: We wish Derrick and Lettice Davis well as they moved to the USA.

Children's Christmas Party: Please remember to register your child or anyone you would to sponsor for the Christmas Party and Toys immediately. The ages for the Children should be between the ages of

0-12. The Christmas Party will be held at the JCA on Sunday December 11, 2005 at 2pm.

Congratulations: We congratulate our member and Chair of the Women's Committee Ms. Camille Hannays-King who was recently appointed to the Community Editorial Board of Directors for the Toronto Star.

"We also congratulate our member Erma Collins who was recently appointed to the Council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario." The Council is the governing body of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. Most members of the Council are Physicians and Surgeons but others are layperson who are selected to bring the public perspective to this body. Mrs. Collins experience make her most qualified for this postion.

Membership Fees: Please remember that all membership renewal fees for 2005 are now due and should be paid immediately. The Year 2006 membership fees will become due March 31 2006. (Our Year End) It is a requirement that Membership fees be paid to be in good standing and to also vote at Quarterly meetings and at the AGM.

Coming Soon: Membership Services Committee will coordinate a Community Church Service on Sunday February 5, 2005 at 4pm at the JCA. This is in Honour of Black History Month. Please remember to come out and show your appreciation and Support.

Seasons Greetings: May all members, their family and friends have a great and safe Holiday Season. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Prosperous and Healthy New Year.

YOUTH CORNER

The Perfect Pair

by Natasha Blake for YAC

Whether you're a young person entering high school, enrolled in university or embarking on a career, it is vital to utilize all of your available resources. In doing so, you will ensure both personal and professional satisfaction.

Meet Volunteer and Network. They are just about the most compelling pair you will ever have the pleasure of meeting. Given the ever-changing dynamics of today's work environment, it is impossible to resist or deny the impact and influence of this dynamic duo.

Volunteering is a commitment of time, talent and energy for the benefit of society. By giving freely and generously of ourselves, we greatly impact the lives of others. Whether your reason for volunteering is due to a personal connection to a cause or someone simply requesting your time, the personal rewards from the experience are immeasurable. Making a contribution to improving the quality of life for even one individual builds a stronger community. Additionally, you can build and enhance your personal, professional and social skills. The opportunities for growth are endless, e.g. leadership, initiative, discipline, perseverance, organization and social awareness.

Volunteers play an integral part in organizations. Non-profit organizations provide an invaluable service to disenfranchised members of our society and volunteers are the backbone of these organizations. One cannot put

a dollar figure on volunteering but it would be safe to say that governments save billions on the energy and efforts volunteers contribute.

Networking is a phenomenal way to magnify the world around us. Through volunteering, you increase your network opportunities in the social, educational and employment realm by increasing your exposure to others. It is a vital tool in connecting with contacts you make on a daily basis especially in terms of enhancing career opportunities. In any given setting, keep in mind, these three P's: Preparation, Poise and Presentation. Always be prepared for an opportunity to knock. Research the industry you desire to work in. e.g. set-up information interviews with movers and shakers, read company annual reports, and take industry-related courses. Make a lasting impression at networking events and social functions, by being poised and presentable in your demeanor, speech and attire. Remember, more is learned through listening than speaking: which is why we have two ears and one mouth. In addition, be enthusiastic, energized and engaged in those you meet. Don't be afraid to market yourself and share your strengths and qualities. Know who you are and what you want. Don't come away from any networking opportunity without at least one new contact. That contact may present you with an opportunity in the future. Volunteering and networking...a winning pair!



Health Corner

Jamaican Canadian Association 2005 Health Fair

In keeping with its mandate to provide educational information and service to its members and the wider community, the Jamaican Canadian Association implemented a Health Fair on October 15, 2005. The objective was to invite various persons and organizations representing different disciplines within the public and voluntary health sector to provide health related information and service that would benefit the community. It was also intended to provide an opportunity for the attendees to interact with the health professionals to learn more about available services, prevent diseases and other health conditions, and how to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The Organizations and individuals that provided Exhibits/ displays or information to the large number of attendees included Toronto Public Health, Canadian Diabetes Association, Trillium Gift of Life, The African Caribbean Diabetes Project, Canadian Sickle Cell Association, Lana Salmon, and Dr. Karl Kabesele.

Toronto Public Health had a very strong contingent that included several Public Health Inspectors, Communicable Disease Investigation staff, Dental Health which was represented by Dr. Hazel Stewart, and staff from the Peer Nutrition Team. This team provided information in the areas of Food Safety, the Eat Smart program, Dental and Oral Health, Tobacco Control, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, West Nile Virus Control, Pesticide Use, Physical Fitness, Nutrition and Dieting and Communicable Disease Control.

In addition to the TPH component, there were exhibits on Heart Health by Dr. Karl Kabesele, the importance of Organ and Tissue Donation by Trillium Gift of Life Foundation, Schizophrenia by Lana Salmon, and Sickle Cell by Abdi. Blood Pressure checks and counseling were done by the Canadian Diabetes Association to the appreciation of the large audience, while the JCA's booth, showcasing some of the organization's social services, was manned by Marlene McKintosh and Karen Tull. The African Caribbean Diabetes Project did a very informative presentation on Healthy Cooking, Reading and Understanding Food Labels for Diabetic. This was reinforced by two cooking demonstrations by the Toronto Public Health Peer Nutrition Team. Camille Hannays-King, Chair of the JCA's Women's Committee was the Guest Speaker and her presentation was focused on mental health.

The Members of the Organizing Committee were Norma Clarke, Faye Conville, Vincent Conville, Claudia Creighton, Amy Nelson, Judith Spencer, Heather Robinson and Sylvanus Thompson. The JCA wishes to express thanks to all the participants, sponsors and attendees that made the 2005 Health Fair a successful one.

Written by
Sylvanus Thompson
Chair, Education Committee



Letter to the Editor

" BRIDGING THE GAP "


A bridge – a structure built over a depression or obstacle for uses as a passageway. A gap – a blank space, an incomplete or deficient area; a wide difference in character or attitude; a problem caused by a disparity....I appreciate the bridges built by those before me – for on their shoulders I am now confident, strong, and tall. For these bridges to continue, we must build on their energy. We must do as they did: recruit, train, and retain a force that will someday continue on with business after we are no longer able. Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "We've come a long way, but we still got a long, long way to go." My focus and purpose in "bridging the gap" for the next term will be to offer a different perspective and insight on how we could be more productive and efficient in our efforts – that is building bridges. While the gap has been somewhat reduced it still remains. Since assuming the position of Chair for Public Relations, I have made it my duty to engage with as many JCA Members, Volunteers, Board and Staff to share perspectives on our JCA "IN FOCUS" Newsletter. The response was tremendous and well received by the Public Relations committee. As result our committee has responded to your suggestions by implementing your ideas.


I am excited about the accomplishments and gains that have been made. Thank you for compliments, encouragement, well wishes, excitement and energy I received from you and others during visits to JCA events and meetings. I thank you for your trust and confidence in me as PR Chair. I know the organization is stronger as a result and more people are empowered. Our Public Relations Committee now looks to the road ahead as "Leadership uncompromised," keeping in our forethought the indispensable resource and invaluable contribution of JCA committees, our Staff, Volunteers, and the entire JCA Membership. I must thank the hardworking and dedicated In Focus Editorial team, Claudette-Cameron Stewart, Carol Plunkett-Fox, Beulah Campbell, Melody Brown, Eunice Graham, Avril James, Natasha Blake, Max Pierre-Jerome, Norma Brown-Lorro and Anton Squire. I must also thank the President, Sandra Carnegie-Douglas and the entire Board of Directors for their support!

I remain committed and willing to make a difference!

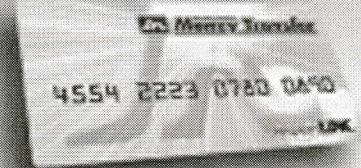
The Letters to the Editor Page will be your forum as a reader to share your comments with the Editorial Team. I encourage you to write to me at the below address.

Leo H. Campbell,
Chair Public Relations
Jamaican Canadian Association
995 Arrow Road
Toronto ON
M9M 2Z5
E-mail publicrelations@jcassoc.org

USE  "AS YU QUINT IT REACH"



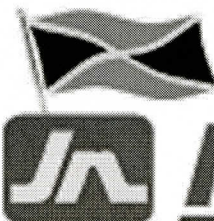
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Guest Writer Column

Looking
at the world,
"Outside
My Window"

Outside My Window:

A 15-year-old's cry for Black Social Reform

Written By: Sean Thomas

I look outside my window-

Astonished at what I see.

Why is all this negativity surrounding me?

*It tears me up inside, because I cannot decipher why.
why? Why? WHY?*

A word, but also a provocative question within itself.

The same question that I continue to ask myself.

Why is it that all my people are still asleep?

They are blinded from reality because they are in too deep.

Into what? DRUGS, MONEY, VIOLENCE, AND SEX,

Because that's what's best,

Or at least that's what they think,

But is that their true aspiration from within?

Within who? No, not me, within yourself!

Because no one can rob you of your own self-wealth.

Unless you let them, that is, by being a victim of manipulation.

Following the crowd instead of leading your own congregation.

You know, "going with the flow",

Because that's what's "cool".

Stressing about keeping up appearances

But NOT stressing about keeping up with school.

*These people outside my window are tryna get between the
sheets*

With everyone they see.

*Permitting a four-letter synonym for death to mark their place in
history.*

*They constantly worry about who's man's sister's brother's ex-
girlfriend is sleeping with their man.*

*Keep in mind that these are the same girls who pass their
pregnancy tests,*

Yet, fail their exams.

In order to impress that sexy girl or cute guy,

They strive to enhance their looks.

But here's my little word of advice,

Close your legs, and open your books!

Why, you ask. The same question arises again.

Knowledge is the key to success,

And without it, you cannot win-

In this city, there are many opportunities,

But only for those who do their best.

Not for those standing outside my window,

Converting their potential work of art into a disgusting mess.

*I now press my head against the glass as I stare with eyes of
contempt.*

*These youth are committing serious crimes that soon they will
regret.*

*You know what, I think I should just close my curtains, and go to
sleep,*

Because at least they're making some people happy.

In fact, they're employing many more police officers, a lot more

social workers,

*And they're increasing the demand for lawyers in our municipality.
You wanna know why there's no money for recreational activities?
Because the government is too busy wasting it on provincial
penitentiaries.*

That my people fill as these mellow days roll on,

Due to the fact that my people refuse to sing their own song.

They're singing a song that has already been written,

One that everyone follows verbatim without making any revisions.

By fulfilling the stereotypes,

They're allowing our suppressors to hold the upper hand.

They call all the shots. Why?

Because we continue to willingly submit to their demands.

Why are those people selling themselves short?

Why are they letting other people determine their self-worth?

Bob Marley encourages us to

"Emancipate [ourselves] from mental slavery

[and] none but ourselves can free our minds"

Physical slavery may be abolished

But I witness mental slavery all the time

For example,

Many of us allow television to subconsciously influence our actions

We appreciate many negative themes glamorized by famous role

models

Who provide us with daily satisfaction

But are you satisfied with the fact that everything you watch on

TV is streamed?

And are you satisfied that your beloved role-models are nothing but

puppets driven by money?

*The reason for this, my brothers and sisters, is one that is quite
disturbing*

The masterminds are the controllers of the media -

People with heavy pockets, making endless profits

Off of the exploitation of you and me

With only their wallets in mind,

They publicize stereotypes to virtualize reality

We are brainwashed into following their lead,

Therefore, slavery for us still remains,

But in a form much stronger,

Since we are enslaved mentally.

*In other words, these guys outside my window who believe that
they're pimps,*

Are WRONG because they aren't in full control

They allow the media to dictate the way their life goes.

So, basically, all these wanna-be thugs are just ig'nant hoes.

**Check yourself in the mirror, and then tell me what is it that
you see?**

Is it someone with great potential who resorts to unoriginality?

*I don't know 'bout you, but that's definitely what I see when I look
at them.*

I just hope that they'll gain the wisdom and self-control

To release their true character from within.

Damn, those people outside my window,

They ain't got a clue. Wait, I'm not done.

Before you laugh and nod in agreement,

Make sure that I'm not staring out at you!

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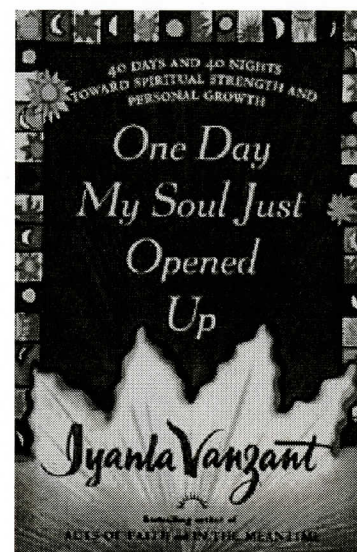
Written with permission of Mr. Sean Thomas

President & Founder Young Black Writers Society

JCA Book Club

WHAT'S IN YOUR HEAD?

JCA's READING CLUB.....Reading Maketh the Man



Book Review

by

Claudette Cameron Stewart

The JCA's Board of Directors and the Public Relations Committee are encouraging each member of our community to make a commitment to read at least one book per month. Reading twelve books for the year is an attainable goal. The children of the community need a viable alternative to the negative effects that come when programs and events are not available in their immediate neighbourhoods to keep them profitably occupied. It is with this in mind that we encourage families to return to the joy of learning via reading. Libraries are in close proximity to most homes - so there is no need to say I can't afford to buy books. The JCA asks that families make a decision to start reading today - we guarantee you will have no regrets.

Our first book being recommended for our reading club is "One Day My Soul Just Opened Up, by author Iyanla Vanzant.

The author's intent for the book is to inspire spiritual strength and personal growth. The author suggests that the

reader reads the book over a period of 40 days and 40 nights - consistently. Having read the book in a few short days, I have found it to be well written. It should not be difficult for readers to find encouragement for personal growth. The fact that people have different religious beliefs, each individual will have to determine what spiritual strength flows from the pages. The days dedicated to "Patience", "Faith", "Discipline" and "Order" (32, 33, 34 & 38) should be considered especially important to all readers.

P.S. The JCA Reading Club is encouraging everyone to read Austin Clarke's "The Polished Hoe" for our next book report - scheduled for the next issue of In Focus, February 2006. Readers are encouraged to send personal commentaries on the book to the Public Relations Chairperson, JCA, 995 Arrow Road, Toronto, ON M6M 2Z5 or by e-mail publicrelations@jcassoc.org, by January 16, 2006. Readers are also encouraged to recommend books for all to read.

Spelling Bee of Canada Needs YOUR Help!

Here's your chance to be a part of the North York West Planning Committee

Founded in 1987, Spelling Bee of Canada™ is a grassroots educational volunteer organization, with a focus on supporting youth excellence in language arts with an emphasis on reading, spelling and writing. In today's high-tech environment, Spelling Bee of Canada™ recognize that it is essential to equip students with the tools that will enable them to comprehend the mass of information available through various media. The proficiency of Spelling is an integral part of childhood education.

We are looking for volunteers to organize the upcoming North York West Spelling Bee (JCA Chapter). We need a team of individuals who have a passion for helping out children between the ages 6-15 years, with experience, knowledge and skill to offer assistance in any of the following areas:

**Marketing Graphics
Coaching Fundraising
Community Liaison
Promotions
Special Events Person
Public Relations/Media**

We are also looking for people who can act as officials, such as:
Pronouncers, Judges, Resource Person, Word-Keeper.

Please contact us:

Sylvanus 416-746-5772 or

Jhuma 416-746-0072 or

E-mail: info@spellingbeefcanada.ca

or www.spellingbeefcanada.ca

FLAG RAISING CEREMONY



City Hall, August 2005

JCA Calendar of Events

Event	Date	Time	Location
JCA Quarterly Membership Meeting	November 27th 2005	2pm	JCA CENTRE
JCA PR Committee Launches Official New JCA Website	November 27th 2005		
JCA Annual Children's Christmas Party Registration Deadline	Dec 5th 2005	5pm	
JCA Annual Children's Christmas Party	Dec 11th 2005	2pm	JCA CENTRE
JCA Black History Community Church Service/Celebrations	Feb 5th 2006	4:00pm	JCA CENTRE
Booonoonoos Brunch	Feb 12th 2006		JCA CENTRE
JCA Quarterly Membership Meeting	Feb 26th 2006	2:00pm	JCA CENTRE